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Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning!

With the cold weather, our furnaces will be working to keep our homes toasty warm. The use of improperly operating oil, natural gas and LPG forced air heating systems and appliances can result in **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** poisoning. **Chief Tom Carr** and the men and women of the **Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS)** offers some of the **CO** exposure warning signs and symptoms and what you can do to protect yourself and your family from this hidden danger. **CO** is a colorless, tasteless, odorless, and non-irritating gas that you may be unaware you are breathing. The signs/symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Symptoms often described as “Flu-like”
- Mild headache initially, increasing in intensity to throbbing headache
- Shortness of breath
- Irritability and fatigue
- Impaired judgment
- Memory loss
- Vomiting
- Symptoms can progress rapidly to coma and death
- Symptoms decrease when leaving the home or location to go to work, school

Some standard steps to prevent CO poisoning from occurring:

- Have your furnace checked before use each year to ensure adequate ventilation and proper operation.
- Always provide adequate ventilation when using wood stoves, fuel-fired space heaters, and fireplaces and ensure proper installation, adjustment and operation of all flame-burning appliances.
- Never use an oven or gas range to heat the house. These appliances use the existing oxygen supply.
- Never burn charcoal inside a home or other enclosed space.
- Always ventilate generators used to run cleaning equipment, pump water or supply electricity to a home. Generators used in a garage can result in fumes seeping into the home.
- **Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms in the home. Read manufacturers instructions regarding placement and what type of alarm warning will sound as it may be intermittent and/or continuous.**

If you are in doubt about whether you may be the victim of CO poisoning or a leak, call 9-1-1.

For more information or other life safety tips, please visit: www.mcfrs.org

“Together We Can Save Lives And Prevent Injuries”